

A HANDBOOK OF MEDICAL HYPNOSIS. By Gordon Ambrose, L.M.S.S.A., and George Newbold, M.B., B.S. Second Edition. (Pp. xiii + 276. 27s. 6d.) London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1958.

BRAINWASHING and advertising techniques bear witness to the effectiveness of suggestibility. Hardly a day passes in the life of any practising medical man that he does not deliberately use it as part of his therapeutic approach. The effects of suggestibility must be taken into account in the design of any experiment to test the effects of a new drug. The 'inert tablet' has been found to be far from inert in many important respects. It is unfortunate therefore that more is not known regarding the mechanisms involved in hypnosis and suggestibility. Both are capable of scientific investigation, but little has been done in this field, mainly because of emotional attitudes engendered by their misuse in the past.

Ambrose & Newbold have produced a very readable book on the subject of medical hypnosis. The paucity of available scientific information on the phenomena of the hypnotic state, including E.E.G. findings, is all too obvious, but this has not deterred the authors from applying their methods to general medicine, psychiatry, anaesthesia, paediatrics, dermatology, obstetrics, and gynaecology. Their case histories show how much they rely on the knowledge of the patients gained from a detailed psychiatric assessment of their history. In many instances they apply what can be regarded as a mirror image of the evolution of Freud's therapeutic approach—a short analysis followed by hypnosis when the dynamics of the problem are used for hypnotic suggestion. The same criticism applies to the results of hypnosis as to psychoanalysis in that, to be successful, the therapist must be a believer in the method. Individual case histories, the lack of controls, and the absence of independent assessment of results make it impossible to define any of the parameters in this field.

It is only fair to say that the authors are prudent in the midst of their enthusiasm. They exercise commendable caution in dealing with the problem of enuresis for example. They do not ignore the conventional medical approach where it is indicated.

A useful chapter is included on the techniques of induction.

This book is worthy of the attention of those who are at a loss to explain on purely physical grounds the therapeutic results they sometimes achieve.

J. G. G.

A METHOD OF ANATOMY: DESCRIPTIVE AND DEDUCTIVE. By J. C. Boileau Grant, M.C., M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.S.(Edin.). Sixth Edition. (Pp. xxv + 879; figs. 862; tables 23. 88s.) London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox Ltd., 1958.

AFTER a good *general* introduction, the book treats the topographical anatomy of the body *regionally*. The author, with a lifetime of teaching experience behind him, has written this book for the student, to be a companion during his dissecting-room studies, and a text for his revision work. Grant is always anxious to *explain* and to be *understood*. A vivid style; clear, simple diagrams; and a wealth of embryological, functional, and pathological correlation make him singularly successful in this.

It is, of course, a debated point just how much topographical anatomy is required of the ordinary undergraduate medical student, and some would judge from the size and weight of the present work that it surely contains too much. However, Grant has been very judicious in selecting items for detailed description and discussion, and much of the book's size is accounted for by explanation and association, and not by a tedious and unnecessary recital of fact.

I would say that the student, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, who wishes to understand his anatomy and appreciate its significance could not do better than to be guided by "Grant's Method" as the structure of the body unfolds before him in the dissecting-room. The big systematic textbooks which most students possess can then be used properly as reference encyclopædias and atlases.

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